An estimated 52% women, including school girls experience menstrual flow (UN, 2010)

In Ethiopia, 51% of the population is female and 23% of women are of reproductive age

The majority of them have no access
  • to clean & safe sanitary products,
  • or clean & private space to change
  • menstrual cloths or pads to wash.

Cultural practices and taboos around menstruation impact the lives of women and girls negatively.
In Ethiopia, girls reached puberty & start menstruating often without adequate information & the psychological readiness to manage it.

UNICEF in collaboration with FMoH and regions has conducted KAP base line survey in six regions, in selected woredas and primary and secondary schools.

Societal Factors

- MHM is not included in the school curriculum
- No formal training is provided on MHM so far
- The challenges of girls during menstruation is not well recognized in the schools as well as communities
- Schools mini media and girls clubs serve to create awareness on reproductive health & HIV/AIDS, but not on MHM
Findings of the Baseline Survey....

- Multiple response analysis revealed that:
  - 50.9% of girls reported that they discuss now about menstruation with their close friends,
  - 24% with their sisters, and 16.3% with their mothers

- There is misconception that a girl can not experience menstruation below the age of 15

- Taboos & secrecy about menstruation overshadowed school girls & limited them from speaking and discussing issues of menstruation in public.
Findings of the Baseline Survey....

- Most boys don’t discuss & think that menstruation is girls’ affair that doesn’t need their engagement.

- In this regard, 39% of girls reported that they afraid of being treated differently if others know that they are on menses.
As per findings, the reasons not discussing about menstruation was:

- It makes me embarrassed/
- It is taboo in my society
- To avoid being teased by others
- Afraid of being ostracized from the society
Menstruation is also believed by most of the society as 
dirt coming out of girl’s body

Out of total, 452 (48.7%) reported that they agree 
and strongly agree on girls in Menstruation
  - Should not attend religious events/conferences.

This indicates that they perceive themselves as 
“unfit” to participate in holy practices during 
menstruation.
The survey findings have concluded:

- The **knowledge gap** was observed at every level of the society;
  - These include parents, teachers, students, health officers, and school WASH representatives.

- The overall **good knowledge was significantly higher** among **urban girls**, girls in **higher grade** and girls from Oromia and SNNPR.

- Existence of deep **silence & taboos** have made MHM activities very challenging.
The survey findings have concluded:

- The overall favorable attitude was significantly higher among girls from medium and rich families.

- The use of commercial sanitary pad is significantly higher among girls from higher grade, rich family and urban residence as compared to low grade, poor family and rural residents.

- The practice gap is mainly related to lack of knowledge and poor WASH facilities in the school environment.
The findings has concluded...

- **Commercial sanitary pads** are expensive for most of the schools girls to buy.

- **Economic status, place of residence and grade level significantly associated** with use commercial sanitary pads and knowledge of girls.

- **Menstrual Hygiene Management** is not incorporated into **WASH policies at all levels; namely at national, regional, woreda and school levels.**
The findings has concluded...

- **WASH facilities** in schools are poorly designed and constructed, don’t consider gender-related needs and number of students.

- **Critical shortage of water, poor sanitation, offensive smelling of toilets**, and poor WASH facility management have been the other serious problems.

- Poor menstruation hygiene management in school setting has also **affected girls’ performance** in school. As result a **significant number of girls get absent from classes** on each menstruation cycle.
To alleviate the problem of Menstruation hygiene management

- FMoH, in collaboration with UNICEF and partners has conducted high level advocacy on MHM

- For the first time, the country has celebrated National event on MHM, on the 30th of May 2017.

Panel Discussion on MHM

MHM Manual endorsed
To alleviate the problem of Menstruation ...........

- The event was broadcasted through national TV, FM radios and in newspapers, the message addressed to millions
To alleviate the problem

- The federal Ministry of health with partners has prepared MHM guidelines, posters

- In collaboration with UNICEF and National Standard authority, preparation of Sanitation standards on disposable and Reusable Sanitary pad is ongoing
Challenges

- Culture
- Taboo
- Tradition
- Awareness
- Economy to buy
- Hard to reach areas and community culture
Recommendation

- Use existing guidelines, Manuals
- Include in curriculum, in HEP
- Cascade to the lower level
- Advocacy using local media
- Appreciate MHM at all level
- Break the silence at all level
- Scale up the best experiences
I THANK YOU!
September, 2017
AA